THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

THE SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH CENTRE

"TODJIKISTONI SOVETY"

THE TADJIK REPUBLIC NEWSPAPER

IN THE TADJIK LANGUAGE

(in Russian)

by

Malkiel Danielov

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МАЛКИЕЛ ДАНИЭЛОВ

СТРУКТУРА И ФУНКЦИИ ТАДЖИКСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКАНСКОЙ ГАЗЕТЫ "ТАДЖИКИСТОНИ СОВЕТИ"

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The "Todjikistoni Sovety" is a general political Party newspaper, and serves as the information organ in the native language of the Tadjikistan Central Party Committee. It appears on four pages and has a daily circulation of 160,000 copies. Its main readers are cotton growers. In its policy it is guided by the local Central Committee and also by Moscow, and the paper emphasizes the help of the "Great Russian people" in the development of the Republic. All problems posed are first considered by the Central Committee, and the Publishing Centre of Republican Newspapers at the Central Committee controls all the financial aspects of the newspaper. Most space is given in the papers to articles based on Party Congress decisions, Party directives, etc. On holidays, anniversary dates, etc., articles are solicited from heads of large construction projects, secretaries of Party organisations, etc. They invariably speak of the unity between the Russian and Tadjik people, about the selfless labour of people of 44 different nationalities for the good of the Tadjik people.

The paper also prints, by directive of the local Central Committee (CC), and in accord with instructions of the Moscow CC, "echoes" to any major international event. Generally these are made to coincide with "Weeks of Struggle" Against (or For, as the case may be)... the liberation of

Vietnam, Israeli aggression, etc. These "echoes" are organised by the Tadjik Telegraph Agency or the paper itself. The newspaper is informed well in advance when these "echoes" will be required and commissions them from prominent local personalities, collective farmers, workers' meetings, etc. The newspaper is informed well in advance when spontaneous workers' meetings will take place, and a reporter always attends them. Sometimes, when such echoes have to be supplied urgently some member of the staff is compelled to write them on behalf of some collective farmer from a far-away mountain "kishlak". In foreign political matters TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) calls the tune. Materials supplied by TASS are printed as supplied without added comment. TASS supplies not only the text that has to be printed, but also instructs on what page the material is to appear, and what size print should be used.

The heads of all departments, and all staff correspondents must be Party members. Since Party membership is a must for promotion, most of the staff strive to join the Party.

The budget of the paper is worked out by the Administrative Dept. of the CC. according to instructions from Moscow for all republican papers. It is then handed down to the Publishing Centre of Republican Newspapers, which assumes responsibility. The paper itself is uninterested in financial matters, and though it seeks circulation for policy reasons, advertising is only of marginal interest. There are several

newspapers in Tadjikistan, in addition to the Moscow papers sold there. Many persons subscribe to several papers, although these may print virtually identical materials. This is because subscription is "voluntarily enforced". Thus, a Party member has to subscribe to "Pravda", a Komsomol member to "Komsomolskaya Pravda".

One of the bodies controlling the paper is "Glavlit" -- the censor's office. It is an organisation never publicly mentioned, but it effects control over all creative art. Without its stamp "Permitted" no paper, magazine, leaflet, book, invitation card, musical score, ballet, etc., can appear. Glavlit in Tadjikistan has a staff of about 12 people, every one of whom handles a certain assignment, including of course newspapers. One always reads proofs along with the editor on duty, making remarks and asking the editor to introduce changes. The censors are guided by lists of "TABU" subjects received from Moscow. These lists are kept in the safe and are never shown to anybody. The censor essentially recommends changes, and his decisions can be appealed against to the CC. Practically, however, he is always supported. Materials coming from Moscow (TASS bulletins, APN bulletins, reprints from Moscow papers) are not censored locally.

The newspaper receives an average of 300 letters from readers a month. Generally the letters complain about the service sector. Such complaints are investigated and printed.

The policy, however, is that letters of complaint must be balanced by letters of approval. The latter are hardly ever received and often have to be written by the staff. Not all letters (spontaneous ones) are printed. If his letter is not printed, the writer receives a letter saying "You have not supplied sufficient facts ...", "Article so and so has already dealt with the question at length", etc. Once a complaint has been printed, the paper is obliged to take steps to set the matter right. When this has been done an account is printed of the results.

Naturally, every paper has a Party cell. Officially it is responsible for the "ideological and moral character" of every staff member (even those who are not Party members). Actually, however, it confines itself to collecting membership fees. This is because the paper is controlled by so many superior bodies that there is nothing left for the local Party cell to do.